



Customer Service Lessons from the Hospitality Industry

Vacations, tourism, amusement parks... guests dream and plan for those fabulous adventures. The best in the hospitality field understand that their guests (not clients or customers) are looking for a quality experience. They want to feel important, valued and special. While it may be just another 'day at the office' for the workers, for the guests, this is the day they've waited for with eager anticipation.

Emotional Intelligence & Hospitality



Unfortunately, just about everyone has their own horror story about bad service. When service people make a guest feel uninvited, unwanted or, an actual annoyance, they have violated the basic rules of emotional intelligence. Either personally or professionally, guests are looking to be treated right. They want to be appreciated rather than merely being a number or inconvenience. For the elite, this comes from recognizing that emotions are highly contagious. Self-awareness starts the process.

A smile, welcoming nonverbal signals, warm words and personalization set the stage for real connection. Self-awareness creates inner feedback that generates positive signals. Intentional, deliberate gestures focus attention on the guest and creating a special experience. Real

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professionalism comes from going the extra mile. Excellence means understanding expectations, delivering quality responses, then going beyond and adding the extras. Let guests have a sense of 'wow.'



For real excellence, the Platinum Rule sets the benchmark. Understand the guest, know how they want to be treated, and use that as the minimum standard of acceptable service. When hospitality is special, individuals stand out. They've personalized the experience with custom touches that make everything memorable. Attention needs to be paid to the little details. Understandably, not everyone will notice, but for those who do, the effort has been well spent.

Attending to details comes through empathy, communication and relationships. Guests will express what they want and need in a myriad of ways. First, they set their standards based on what has been communicated to them. These expectations can be easily identified through dialogue with past and current guests. Ongoing verbal and nonverbal cues create a rapport and continuous feedback for service. Deliver on expectations then exceed them. Solicit feedback. When people understand that there is genuine caring and concern, they're willing to partner to be treated well.

Host > Service > Guest



Personal > Experiences & Memories > Professional

Leverage opportunities to connect, communicate and develop relationships. Whenever guests come in contact with service personnel, there is the chance to personalize the experience and develop a closer relationship. Conversation and interaction avoids having a 'one size fits all' mindset. Genuine resonance comes from using the opportunity to form a bridge. The best separate themselves by not only capitalizing on opportunities but by creating more. High touch is critical. It can become even more effective when combined with high tech. Conversations can be continued electronically long after the personal visit is over.

So how come so many organizations struggle with reputation and service? The key lies in an integrated approach to emotional intelligence. Most companies fail to connect both with their team and their guests. Feelings and relationships set the tone for service. When the organization establishes a climate and culture that fosters relationships and communications, it sets the framework for long-term success.

The rules that the best in hospitality use could be well emulated in other areas. Giving the best in service and value is never a mistake. Many organizations lose track of the importance of their clientele. They fail to maintain a continuing, ongoing relationship. When the dialogue stops, errors abound.

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How do you and your organization leverage emotional intelligence for organizational excellence and service? Have you made positive feelings a critical objective in your business? What are you doing to leverage relationships for long term excellence?

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